

Title of Report:	Emerging Themes for consideration under new Economic Development Strategy
Committee Report Submitted To:	Leisure and Development Committee
Date of Meeting:	18th August 2020
For Decision or For Information	For Information

Linkage to Council Strategy (2019-23)	
Strategic Theme	Accelerating our Economy and Contributing to Prosperity
Outcome	Promoting the Borough as an attractive place to live, work, invest and visit
Lead Officer	Head of Service, Prosperity and Place

Budgetary Considerations	
Cost of Proposal	£37,000 (as per agreed tender)
Included in Current Year Estimates	YES – funding is within existing budget
Capital/Revenue	Revenue
Code	
Staffing Costs	No extra staffing costs

Screening Requirements	Required for new or revised Policies, Plans, Strategies or Service Delivery Proposals.		
Section 75 Screening	Screening Completed:	No	To be completed near end of programme
	EQIA Required and Completed:	No	To be completed near end of programme
Rural Needs Assessment (RNA)	Screening Completed	No	To be completed near end of programme
	RNA Required and Completed:	No	To be completed near end of programme
Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)	Screening Completed:	No	To be completed near end of programme
	DPIA Required and Completed:	No	To be completed near end of programme

1.0 Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to inform Members as to the current position of the development of the new Economic Development Strategy.

2.0 Current Position

Despite the break since March, work has continued on the development of a new economic development strategy for the Borough. This strategy will take the Borough until 2030. However, there will be relevant pause points to review.

The economic strategy and action plan for the Causeway Coast and Glen's council area was envisaged in a vastly different context, one where the global and local economies were in relatively positive growth territory, albeit with a range of long standing and emerging challenges in play. While many of our economic challenges hold, Covid-19 changed everything. It is appropriate to acknowledge the long-standing challenges our economy faces, take the economic lessons from the Covid-19 crisis and strive to meet them head on.

It is within this new operating context that this economic strategy for the Causeway Coast and Glen's area has been developed. This Strategy sets out to understand and evaluate the economic position of the Causeway Coast & Glens area and give recommendations for the council with a horizon of 2035. This strategy and action plan will be used by the Council to lead the Borough in achieving its full potential in order to deliver inclusive and sustainable wealth and well-being for its citizens.

3.0 Themes

Building on the series of consultations and body of supporting work undertaken in support of the development of this strategy, including comprehensive data analysis and an assessment of policy initiatives elsewhere, the following areas of focus are proposed. The six areas of focus for recovery and renewal are presented below, with a commentary on their rationale for inclusion. Each theme for action aims to deliver on an ambition to deliver a green, connected and fair economy in Causeway Coast and Glens.

The new strategy will be based on (1) Renewal and (2) Recovery.

The themes cover both existing and new areas of work for the Borough including:

1. Continuing Business Start and enhancing the provision for those who require more in-depth assistance.
2. Continuing the ongoing Business Support through some form of Alchemy programme.
3. Support for job-matching and community employment programmes.
4. Product and Process Innovation.
5. Continued focus on communications infrastructure.
6. Developing the Circular Economy, retro-fitting, and other renewable actions.

A short section on Growth Deal will also be included, and consultees will be invited to put forward any ideas they may have around the emerging themes and subsequent potential growth deal projects.

4.0 Next Steps

The themes presented in Annex A now form part of an open consultation which commenced earlier this month and will run through to the end-September. The next steps are as follows:

- Share with Elected Members through the Growth Deal Sub Committee, Leisure and Development Committee, wider Council staff stakeholders.

- Consultation Period – 3 August to 25 September 2020.
- Review any further emerging actions and assimilate, if relevant – this will take place as the consultation proceeds, and with a final review at end-September.
- Consideration of action plan, resourcing and potential budget – end-October (internal process).
- Further Elected Member workshop/review, depending on request from members – November 2020.
- Adoption, if agreeable, by Full Council in December.

For the period to 25 September, the material presented will be available, with a questionnaire, on social media and Council's website. It will be distributed via the Unit's own extensive ezine database. In addition, staff telephone numbers will be included for one to one contact, and if requested, staff will also be available for meetings, either in person or online. Members are encouraged to feed back any thoughts and the Unit's staff are on hand for any group or individual meetings.

Annex A – Emerging Themes

Recovery

Labour Market Activation

Theme	Sub theme	Issue	Implication	Causeway Coast and Glens Call to Action
Labour Market Activation	Job search support	A significant proportion of the Borough's employees are on Furlough and there is a heightened risk of significant levels of unemployment	Sudden and significant numbers of people becoming unemployed can lead to economic depression, erode the skills base of the labour force and have significant mental health and wider health impacts if short term unemployment becomes ingrained/long term.	Council can act as a key enabler in providing labour market activation programmes (training, interview support) and community employment programmes as well as providing a rapid response 'one front door' for job matching across the borough.
	Job matching	Redundancy announcements across NI are increasing and projected to increase further.		
	Assured skills	The Skills Barometer from Ulster University shows a mismatch between supply of skills and demand. Consultations bear skills challenges out	For companies that wish to grow, the inability to recruit staff is a key barrier, which can lead to delayed growth or companies locating elsewhere.	An assured skills programme (only inward investors/Invest NI clients are currently eligible) would alleviate skills shortages
	Anchor institution social clauses	Anchor institutions in the borough can have a significant influence on labour demand either directly or through annual procurement expenditure.	Anchor institutions can be utilised to support the creating job opportunities for residents in the Borough	Devise a procurement strategy that promotes local delivery and promotes social clauses which provide opportunity for unemployed residents.

Business Start and Survival

Theme	Sub theme	Issue	Implication	Causeway Coast and Glens Call to Action
Business Start/Survival	Go for it +	Causeway Coast and Glens have a relatively low level of entrepreneurship.	Fewer new business starts hinders economic growth and diversity.	Enhanced 'exploring enterprise' programmes from school age and up and ongoing 'Go for it' business start support. Additional Exploring enterprise support for newly unemployed Fast track/intensive support for high growth potential startups.

		A considerable majority of Northern Ireland companies are not Invest Northern Ireland clients, thus not accessing client company support levels.	A clear cohort of companies can be serviced without overlap with Invest Northern Ireland.	Understand the pool of non-serviced companies and build engagement plan to provide relevant support programmes
	Deep business insights=Tailored Support	Business support is crowded with limited effectiveness and low awareness.	The solution is not merely 'more' support but value added, high quality support that business know about.	Map current provision, listen to business and create a concierge and signposting service
		Interactions are transactional rather than being focused on relationship building.	Does not build ambition or promote correct behaviours.	Longer term engagement with smaller pool of companies where CC&G can show leadership, mentorship, accredited courses
	Localising supply chain	There is a growing movement towards local wealth building and using the anchor institutions and local assets to maintain as much the economic activity within the local area as possible. Working towards local wealth building principles (as championed by Preston) can greatly enhance local growth.	Procurement contracts are awarded to large multinationals and some of the economic benefit is extracted from the local area.	Pursue a local wealth building strategy.

Renewal

Business Evolution

Theme	Sub theme	Issue	Implication	Causeway Coast and Glens Call to Action
Business Evolution	Re/Upskilling for future economy	The economic landscape is changing – industry 4.0, trends towards home working and online retail are all influencing the skills our economy needs.	Without adapting to a changing economic context through management and leadership skills, adoption of new techniques and process automation, our businesses could get left behind.	Future economy training/business support should be available to support our business base adapt.
	Innovation support			Product and process innovation support programmes are required.
	Priority sector support	'Picking winners' can risk missing new emerging sectors but our borough clearly has a range of sectoral strengths and the ability to gain	Developing specialisms builds profile, which helps attract more businesses to start in the area.	Develop a priority sector plan and tailor support according to need.

		specialisation in some areas such as artisanal food and craft and green/clean energy.		
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A Connected Borough

Theme	Sub theme	Issue	Implication	Causeway Coast and Glens Call to Action
Connected Borough	Digital revolution	Business and residential demands for fast broadband is relentless.	Without exceptional business and domestic broadband provision, the borough could lose out to other locations for investment and residents.	Ensure the broadband infrastructure is with the best available for all areas of the borough.
	Modern connections	There are key infrastructure weaknesses across the borough in roads, energy, leisure (cycle ways and river use) public transport etc.	Better infrastructure will support economic growth.	Deliver a capital expenditure programme that addresses key weaknesses.

A Green Borough

Theme	Sub theme	Issue	Implication	Causeway Coast and Glens Call to Action
Green Borough	Circular Economy Leader	We continue to land fill too much of our waste, significant amounts of which have to be exported as considerable cost.	Poor waste management is inefficient and environmentally unsound. Maximising the circular economy mitigates this.	Support the growth of a circular economy across the borough.
	Retrofitted efficiency	Our buildings are some of the most inefficient in Europe.	Addressing the environmental inefficiency of existing buildings is a significant step towards net carbon neutrality and creates employment opportunity.	Retrofit inefficient buildings across the borough.
	Smart and green grid	The smart control of grids with capacity to handle and store renewable sources of energy is highly efficient.	Smart and green grids are a key element of a move towards better climate change management.	Develop a regional climate strategy to capture a comprehensive approach to delivering net carbon neutrality.

A Renewed Place

Theme	Sub theme	Issue	Implication	Causeway Coast and Glens Call to Action
Renewed Place	Town village renewal that places vibrancy at the core	Our towns and villages have to reinvent themselves to ensure they remain vibrant, accessible and safe.	Losing the vibrancy of our towns and villages will have deeply damaging long-term economic and social costs.	Develop a town and village renewal strategy to ensure the continued viability of towns and villages across the borough.